

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 GUATEM 00360 181833Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02
MCT-01 TRSE-00 /059 W
-----190605Z 082972 /23 10
R 181658Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4515

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 0360

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, GT
SUBJ: STATISTICS ON POLITICAL VIOLENCE

1. THE WORD "UPSURGE" HAS CREPT INTO EMBASSY REPORTING IN RECENT MONTHS IN DESCRIBING CURRENT LEVEL OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE AS COMPARED WITH PERIOD OF 12 TO 18 MONTHS AGO, AND THE WORD HAS BEEN PICKEQD UP IN DEPARTMENT SUMMARY OF HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION WHICH WILL SHORTLY BE SENT TO CONGRESS. WHILE SHARP INCREASES AND DECREASES FROM ONE MONTH TO ANOTHER HAVE OCCURRED, AND THERE HAS ALSO BEEN SLIGHT OVERALL INCREASE, EMBASSY IS SOMEWHAT CONCERNED THAT RECURRING REFERENCES TO AN UPSURGE IN VIOLENCE MAY GIVE IMPRESSION THAT SITUATION IS WORSE THAN IT IS.

2. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, EMBASSY FOR SOME YEARS HAS SUBMITTED A MONTHLY REPORT ON NUMBER OF INCIDENTS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE. EACH PERSON KILLED OR WOUNDED IN A POLITICALLY MOTIVATED ENCOUNTER, EACH PERSON KIDNAPPED, AND EACH POLITICAL BOMBING CONSTITUTE A SINGLE "INCIDENT" FOR PURPOSES OF OUR STATISTICAL COUNT. AS REPORTS ARE BASED PRIMARILY ON OFTEN UNRELIABLE NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS, AND AS IT IS OFTEN DIFFICULT TO DISTINGUISH A POLITICALLY MOTIVATED KILLING FROM ONE THAT IS NOT, WE HOLD NO BRIEF FOR THE PRECISION OF THE STATISTICS. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THEY DO PROVIDE A ROUGH YARDSTICK OF TRENDS IN THE LEVEL OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE.

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3. FOLLOWING IS AVERAGE NUMBER OF INCIDENTS PER MONTH IN EACH OF THE LAST SIX YEARS, PLUS THE MONTHLY AVERAGE FOR THE LAST SIX MONTHS:

JULY 1970 - JUNE 1971: 82.1 INCIDENTS
JULY 1971 - JUNE 1972: 80.3

JULY 1972 - JUNE 1973: 61.0
JULY 1973 - JUNE 1974: 57.2
JULY 1974 - JUNE 1975: 36.7
JULY 1975 - JUNE 1976: 22.4
JULY 1976 - DECEMBER 1976: 26.7

4. HIGHEST NUMBER OF INCIDENTS IN ANY MONTH DURING THIS PERIOD
OCCURRED IN MAY 1971, WHEN OUR COUNT WAS 184 INCLUDING 104
KILLINGS. AVERAGE FOR JULY - DECEMBER 1976 WAS 27, INCLUDING
AVERAGE OF 16 KILLINGS. THIS FIGURE IS UP SLIGHTLY FROM
1975-76 BUT THE INCREASE IS SO SLIGHT THAT IT IS PROBABLY WLL
WITHIN OUR MARGIN OF ERROR. IN ANY EVENT, GUATEMALA IS A LONG
WAY AWAY FROM THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE OF THE ARANA ADMINISTRATION.
THERE MAY VERY WELL BE SOME FURTHER INCREASE AS CAMPAIGN FOR
1978 ELECTIONS MOVES INTO HIGH GEAR, BUT IT IS CLEARLY TOO
EARLY TO TALK ABOUT ANY SIGNIFICANT "UPSURGE".
BOSTER

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, DATA, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, CIVIL DISORDERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 18-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Secure: OPEN
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